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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this exploratory field study were to discover the utility of career-oriented skills and competencies in speech communication as perceived by representatives from employment agencies, to discover current perceptions of the field by representatives from employment agencies, and to discover the bases for these perceptions. The target sample for the study consisted of employment agencies located in Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska. An interview schedule was constructed with 16 employment counselors. In summary, all of the masked career-oriented speech communication skills and competencies were perceived by respondents as important in terms of marketability. In addition, specialized technical skills, personal qualities, and previous work experience were mentioned as determinants of marketability. (The results are presented in both narrative and table format.) (RB)

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MARKETABILITY:

WHO NEEDS US?

AND

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THEM?

by

Diane Lee Lockwood -- Sara Boatman

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Central States Speech Association Convention, Kansas City, April, 1975

Career education is a very real issue in academe. For our discipline of speech communication, career education is a call to account from both students and administrators. If, as former Commissioner of Education Sidney Marland states, "the fundamental concept of career education is that all educational experiences-- curriculum, instruction, counseling--should be geared to preparation for economic independence, personal fulfillment, and an appreciation for the dignity of work,"¹ how then can we as speech communication educators utilize this concept to provide our students with the ultimate outcome of career education in any discipline: Marketability? The question, therefore, becomes, in the words of past SCA President Howell, not "where are we?" and "where are we going?" but "who needs us?" and "what can we do for them?"²

In order to determine "who needs us" and "what we can do for them," thereby increasing the employment potential of our field, a realistic base from which to develop programs in career education must be secured. If we accept as our responsibility the task of preparing our graduates not only for educational careers, but also for job opportunities within the business world, then we must seek input from those directly involved with careers in the field of business. Speech communication teachers can, at best, only guess what skills and competencies may be potentially marketable within the business community. Therefore, a variety of methods should be used to obtain valid input from the business world. Primarily, two sources have been utilized in previous research. Input has been secured from recent graduates who

entered business organizations and from other members of the business community.

Di Salvo, Larsen and Seiler obtained responses from business administration graduates who were currently working in organizational settings. Specifically, respondents were asked to indicate the degree of importance of various communication skills and the perceived success of their training in these skills. Results indicated that the following skills were necessary for effective organizational participation: listening, advising, persuading, routine information exchange, small group problem solving, writing and technical presentation.³

Diagnostic procedures have also been conducted with business representatives to determine communication skills necessary for effective performance within an organizational system. The 1972 SCA Summer Conference on Career Communication Education is an example of this approach. In order to explore the relationship between speech communication education and career preparation, responses from career spokesmen were sought to the question, "what speech communication competencies are required in your business, industry, agency or profession?"⁴

Conference participants suggested or implied that one or more of the following skills were essential in their respective businesses: small group facilitation, interviewing, problem-solving/decision-making, public relations, listening, persuasion, motivation, conflict resolution, speaking competence, relationship building, and questioning techniques.

A report of the SCA ad hoc committee on non-academic career opportunities (comprised mainly of individuals who were speech majors in

college who had entered careers in business and government) suggests the relevance of a background in speech communication for the following types of jobs: personnel, public relations and communications, marketing, and general administration. The committee also reported that

. . . in general, the recruiting representatives of the government as well as those of business and various social agencies are not well informed about the type and quality of education received by speech communication majors and tend to consider these individuals over-specialized for their employment needs. They look at them as "professional speakers or actors" but not as broadly educated individuals who as a bonus, bring with them to the job, highly developed awareness and skill in the communication area.⁵

Taylor and Buchanan sought responses to questionnaires which were mailed to business and governmental agencies in the Southeast. Each organization was asked five questions concerning the importance of communication to their operation, potential problems in communication, and the need for supervisory personnel with communication training. Results indicated that communication majors were needed in employee, customer and public relations, personnel and management development, internal and external publications, and sales. No one, however, listed a need for a communication specialist to solve communication problems. According to Taylor and Buchanan, "the omission of this vocational specialty suggests that business and industry may be inadequately informed concerning training in the field of communications, and several respondents indicated their total lack of familiarity with communications as an academic discipline."⁶

Data from the previously cited studies are vital to provide a basis for identifying those competencies which should form the core of

instructional development in career communication education. The potential would then exist to provide a training ground for students to receive the necessary skills to function effectively in the world of work. However, another equally important facet of career communication education includes engendering realistic perceptions of our field from all persons involved in the hiring process. This process must include representatives from referral agencies (e.g., employment agencies, placement services) as well as business personnel directly responsible for hiring, since the perception of persons with referral agencies constitutes an important linkage between the employee and the potential employer. If any representative within the total employment process who interviews the speech communication graduate perceives his or her major as sole training in professional speaking or acting, then the careful training which the graduate has received in the totality of human communication means little to his or her initial employment potential. Therefore, not only must we educate our students within the context of career communication education, but we must also educate those individuals who are responsible for referring our students to existing job opportunities and those who are responsible for hiring our students.

The previously cited studies have concerned themselves primarily with representatives of business organizations. To date, however, no research has been conducted with those agencies which represent the referral linkage between graduates and business organizations. Therefore, in an attempt to provide broader based diagnostic input for a viable approach to career education in speech communication, the

purposes of this exploratory field study were,

1. To discover the utility of career-oriented skills and competencies in speech communication as perceived by representatives from employment agencies.
2. To discover current perceptions of our field by representatives from employment agencies.
3. To discover the bases for these perceptions.

PROCEDURES

Methodology

The decision to conduct this study through a descriptive field methodology was made for several reasons. First, by using this methodology, one can attempt to provide answers to the first basic question in planning for action research, "what is the present situation?" In other words, descriptive field research is a valuable tool in conceptualizing what is actually operating in a system. Second, studies of a descriptive nature can make substantial contributions by clarifying questions, defining variables, and indicating approaches. Third, by conducting interviews, new insights or speculations not afforded by other techniques and sources of data are possible, and validity checks can be made on other sources of information.

Sample

The target sample for the study consisted of employment agencies located in Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska. Employment agencies were selected because they generally provide initial job referrals to applicants on both local and national levels. Sixteen employment counselors were interviewed.

Instrument

An interview schedule was constructed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To discover the perceived utility of career-oriented speech communication skills in terms of marketability
2. To discover current perceptions of the speech communication discipline
3. To discover the bases for these perceptions

Perceived utility of speech communication skills: A list of career-oriented skills was extracted from the Proceedings of the 1972 SCA Summer Conference on Career Communication Education. The skills extracted were those most frequently mentioned by conference participants. A brief description was then written for each skill, in order to provide standardization in the interview process (See Figure 1).

In order to discover the perceived utility of these skills, a hypothetical situation was developed which required the respondent to both rate and rank the importance of each skill within the general context of marketability. The skills were not identified as those acquired by a speech communication major (See Interview Schedule, Question 1).

Current perceptions of speech communication: Eight open-ended questions were developed to elicit the following information from respondents:

- A. Perceived skills and knowledge of speech communication majors.
- B. Perceived market for speech communication majors
- C. Disciplines related to speech communication

FIGURE 1

Career-Oriented Skills and Competencies

Small Group Facilitation: Ability to develop and facilitate effective functioning of small groups within an organization, both in terms of accomplishing and group's task and establishing an atmosphere of cooperation within the group.

Interviewing: Ability to assess individual capabilities and establish rapport with potential employees or those already on the job.

Problem-Solving/Decision-Making: Ability to analyze a problem, make decisions concerning specific strategies to solve the problem, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these solutions.

Public Relations: Ability to establish communication which invites credibility, trust, and confidence between a firm and the public.

Listening: Ability to receive, interpret, understand and respond to both verbal and nonverbal messages from clients or employees, both in terms of the information given and the feelings expressed.

Persuasion: Ability to persuade clients or employees (as individuals or as groups) to accept a policy, believe a claim, or take a specific course of action.

Motivation: Ability to motivate others in a given job situation by being sensitive and responsive to their needs.

Conflict Resolution: Ability to handle conflict between individuals or groups within an organization by diagnosing the conflict and selecting strategies to achieve resolution of the conflict.

Speaking Competence: Ability to think through, organize, and present information in a concise and coherent manner.

Relationship Building: Ability to facilitate positive and productive relationships between co-workers and between members of various levels of an organization.

Questioning Techniques: Ability to ask questions which are precise, clear, and logical for the purpose of securing relevant and in-depth information.

- D. Actual placement of speech communication majors (See Interview Schedule, questions 2-9)

Basis for Perceptions: Finally, respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with their understanding of the discipline of speech communication, and then to specify sources of information which contributed to this understanding (See Interview Schedule, question 10).

Conducting the Interviews

An introductory cover story was designed to mask both the purpose of the study and the identity of the interviewer. Respondents were told that they were participating in one facet of a large-scale interdisciplinary career education study under the auspices of the University of Nebraska (see Interview Schedule). The interviewers, if asked by respondents, identified themselves as educational psychology majors.

The interviews were conducted from the written interview schedule by the authors and two graduate students in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln department of speech communication.⁷ The graduate student interviewers were thoroughly briefed beforehand. All interviews were tape recorded. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

RESULTS

Perceived utility of speech communication skills

Respondents were asked to rate each of the masked career-oriented speech communication skills with respect to their degree of importance in terms of marketability. Each skill was rated on a five-point scale:

- 1 - Extremely Important
- 2 - Quite Important
- 3 - Somewhat Important
- 4 - Of Little Importance
- 5 - Of No Importance

Mean scores indicated that all skills were rated within the "Extremely Important" to "Somewhat Important" range. Skills which received mean ratings within the "Extremely Important" to "Quite Important" range included listening, problem-solving/decision-making, motivation, questioning techniques, and speaking competence.

Table 1
Mean Rating of Career-Oriented Skills*

Skill	$\bar{x}$
Listening	1.38
Problem-Solving/Decision-Making	1.69
Motivation	1.81
Questioning Techniques	1.88
Speaking Competence	1.94
Interviewing	2.00
Public Relations	2.06
Relationship Building	2.06
Persuasion	2.13
Conflict Resolution	2.31
Small Group Facilitation	2.75

*n=16, Range: 1.00 Extremely Important to 5.00 Of No Importance

Respondents were then asked to rank order the 11 skills and competencies in terms of their potential marketability. Three of the five highest-rated skills (listening, motivation and speaking competence) were also within the five highest-ranked skills. In addition, the two

lowest-ranked skills (small group facilitation and conflict resolution) also received the lowest rankings.

Table 2

Mean Ranking of Career-Oriented Skills*

SKILL	$\bar{x}$
Listening	3.56
Motivation	4.44
Speaking Competence	4.75
Public Relations	5.19
Interviewing	5.31
Persuasion	5.50
Problem-Solving/Decision-Making	6.38
Questioning Techniques	6.63
Relationship Building	7.00
Conflict Resolution	7.88
Small Group Facilitation	8.88
*n=16, Range-1 High to 11 Low	

It is important to note, however, that all 11 skills were perceived as being at least "Somewhat Important" in terms of potential marketability.

Respondents were then asked to generate other skills which they perceived as necessary for a client to possess in order to be easily referred to existing jobs. Responses included technical skills (specifically, computer programming, accounting and mathematics), and

technical writing ability. In addition, several personal qualities were mentioned, including adaptability, poise, appearance, goal-orientation, and desire to work. Finally, several respondents emphasized the importance of previous work experience.

In summary, all of the masked career-oriented speech communication skills and competencies were perceived by respondents as important in terms of marketability. In addition, specialized technical skills, personal qualities, and previous work experience were mentioned as determinants of marketability.

Current Perceptions of Speech Communication

Respondents were asked to specify the skills and knowledge which they expected a speech communication major to possess. Responses, in order of frequency, included:

1. Public Speaking
2. Ability to relate to others
3. Writing ability (correct grammar and spelling)
4. Broadcasting skills
5. Debate
6. Speech Pathology

In addition, one respondent replied, "I haven't the slightest idea," and another replied, "they have no skills applicable to the business world."

When respondents were asked if they expected anything different from a person holding a Masters Degree, 50% responded "no," and the

remainder stated "more of the same." One respondent replied that although he would not expect a difference in the degree of training, he would expect a difference in the salary expectation of the Masters Degree holder.

When respondents were asked, "How difficult have you found or do you think it would be to place a speech communication major in a job," responses ranged from "Rather Difficult" to "Very Difficult." Reasons for this judgment included:

1. Limited or no market for this academic area
2. Only large companies would have positions utilizing this specialized skill
3. The discipline relates to the academic world only
4. The discipline has no practical application
5. Areas in which these majors might be utilized (specifically, government, television-radio, speech writing, public relations or sales) are over-populated with applications or limited in job openings.

Several respondents indicated that placement would depend on the applicant's flexibility and willingness to adapt to a "non-speech" related job. One respondent stated that placement would be a function of the applicant's expectations; he stated, "if the applicant's expectations are based entirely on his degree, then we'll have placement problems."

Respondents were then asked to specify jobs which they would recommend to a speech communication major. Nine areas were suggested:

1. Writing (business manuals, house publications, and speech writing)
2. Public Relations and Public Affairs

3. Sales or Service Representative
4. Advertising
5. Television-Radio
6. Management Trainee
7. Personnel
8. Social Work
9. Education (teaching, tutoring, and speech pathology)

Several of the above areas were repeated when respondents were asked to specify the "ideal" job for a speech communication major if the present employment market was unlimited. "Ideal" positions included:

1. Political speech writer, ambassador, translator, public relations person for a politician
2. News media commentator, newscaster, or advertising representative
3. Public Relations
4. Sales
5. Management
6. Account executive for advertising or radio-television corporation

When asked about jobs that they would recommend to a former speech communication teacher who wished to change jobs, respondents suggested many of the same areas previously reported. In addition, one respondent replied that he would recommend that the individual stay in teaching, explaining "former teachers are difficult to place because of the perception on the part of businesses that they can't function in the 'real world.'"

Respondents were asked if they had ever had speech communication majors as clients; if so, they were asked to specify the number and where the majors were placed. Respondents from six agencies replied that they had never had speech communication majors as clients, and one respondent was uncertain. Respondents from six agencies who had had one or more speech communication majors as clients placed these clients in the following positions:

1. Sales Representative
2. Employment Counselor
3. Public Relations
4. Radio Disc Jockey
5. "Media-Related Jobs"

When respondents were asked to specify other academic disciplines which they felt were closely related to speech communication, they mentioned the following:

1. Journalism
2. English
3. Foreign Language
4. Education
5. Political Science
6. History
7. Public Relations-Advertising

In summary, results of the questions designed to ascertain current perceptions of the speech communication discipline indicate that these respondents:

1. Perceive the discipline of speech communication as largely public performance oriented
2. Found it difficult to suggest jobs for speech communication majors
3. Perceived only a limited application of speech communication to the business world

When viewed collectively, these results suggest that a largely uni-dimensional perception of the discipline of speech communication exists: there was almost no recognition of the discipline beyond public speaking.

Origin of Perceptions

When asked to indicate how satisfied they were with their understanding of the discipline of speech communication, six respondents stated that they were satisfied with their understanding. When asked, "Where did this understanding come from?" these six respondents replied that they acquired their information from one or more of the following sources:

1. Their general knowledge of the University
2. Public speaking or drama classes which they had taken in college
3. Contacts with clients
4. Reading resumes
5. A co-worker with a major in speech communication
6. Ideas stimulated by the interview itself

On the other hand, six respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with their understanding of the speech communication discipline. These respondents, however, felt that they had some limited knowledge of the discipline, which was acquired from one or more of the following sources:

1. Contacts with clients
2. High school and/or college speech fundamentals courses
3. Educational literature on speech therapy
4. A relative in broadcast journalism
5. A Dale Carnegie course
6. Assumptions from common knowledge

Four respondents indicated that they did not have any understanding of the discipline.

In general, results indicated that respondents had limited sources of information about the discipline of speech communication. Those respondents who reported their confidence of a clear understanding of the discipline described it largely within a public-speaking context. Basically, respondents' perceptions of the discipline seemed to originate from former public-speaking classes, statements from clients, resumes, and general assumptions about "speech."

Limitations

These results should be interpreted with some caution for the following reasons:

1. Although the employment agencies in this study generally provided both local and national referrals, respondents did indicate that the marketability of speech communication majors might be a function of the size of city and variety of businesses within a particular locale. It is important to determine if the same perceptions of our discipline would exist in other areas of the country. This study was designed to

provide input for the development of viable programs in career communication education, but such programs will be most functional when they are developed from a broad diagnostic base.

2. Although the career-oriented speech communication skills listed in the interview schedule were perceived by respondents as being important in terms of marketability, there were some apparent discrepancies in the ratings and rankings of these skills. One might predict that skills which received the highest ratings ($\bar{X} < 2.00$) would also receive the highest marketability rankings. Results indicated that this prediction was valid for listening, motivation, and speaking competence. However, two skills (problem-solving/decision-making and questioning techniques), which initially received high ratings ($\bar{X} = 1.69$ and 1.88) received mean marketability rankings of 7 and 8 respectively. This apparent discrepancy could be a result of the context within which respondents placed the skills when they were forced to rank them. That is, respondents initially rated the skills based on the descriptions provided by the interviewer. When respondents, however, were asked to rank order the skills, they tended to place these skills within the context of a specific position (e.g., management or sales trainee). Consequently, a skill, such as problem-solving/decision-making, which had initially received a high rating, later received a mean marketability ranking of 7 because respondents did not perceive this skill as crucial to entry-level positions. In short, respondents tended to rate skills on the basis of descriptions provided by the interviewer, whereas rankings were based on the perceived utility of skills with respect to a specific position designated by the respondent. More meaningful data

might be collected in future research if the career-oriented skills were placed within the context of a number of specific positions. For example, the interviewer might ask the respondent to rate and rank career-oriented skills with respect to "a sales position," "a management position," a "personnel position," and other occupational areas.

3. One other limitation concerning the interview schedule should be discussed. The "interviewing" skill was described to respondents from the perspective of the employer, not the potential employee. Consequently, the description of the "interviewing" skill may have caused some confusion for the respondent. We would therefore suggest that the description of the "interviewing" skill be revised to include both perspectives--employer and potential employee.

Summary

Based on the results of this preliminary study, the masked career-oriented skills and competencies were all perceived as being somewhat too extremely important in terms of marketability. However, these skills were not generally perceived as those acquired by a speech communication major. Rather, speech communication majors were perceived as individuals who had received extensive training in speech writing and speech making, and who would consequently be difficult to place in the existing job market. Respondents' perceptions of speech communication majors were based primarily on general assumptions gained from their former public-speaking classes and from the term "speech." In nearly every interview, the respondent dropped "communication" in referring to the major. One respondent stated that he was "unfamiliar with this new term /speech communication/." In general, respondents seemed frustrated during the

interviews, and many stated that they would like to have more information about the speech communication major.

DISCUSSION

The results of this exploratory field study suggest that the major questions to which this paper is addressed, "who needs us?" and "what can we do for them?" can be answered from a variety of perspectives.

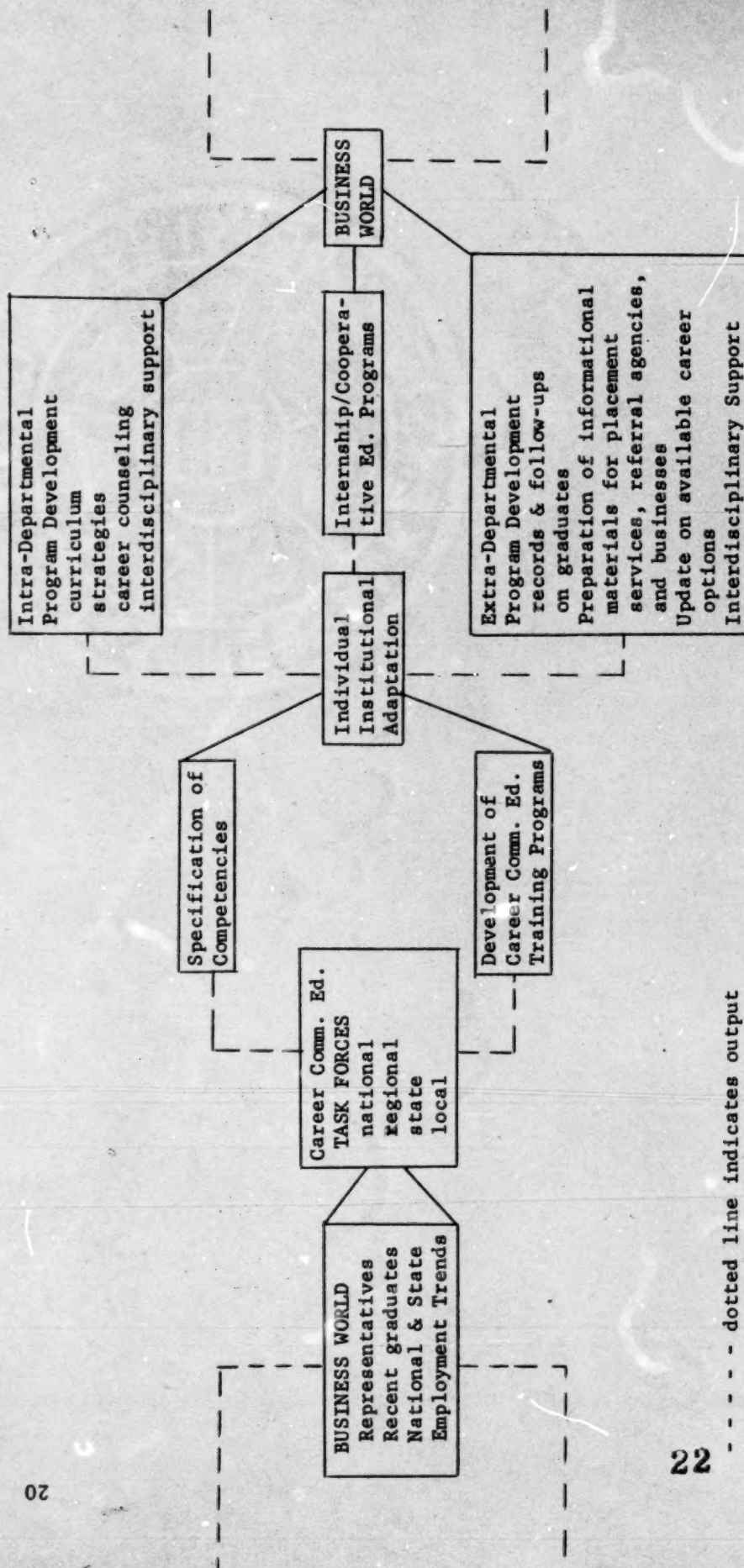
When we examine the data from this survey, we must initially conclude that these respondents currently perceive that very few businesses need speech communication majors per se. However, if we examine the degree of importance which respondents attached to the masked speech communication skills and competencies, we find that they are considered to be important in a variety of business careers. The problem, then, becomes one of recognition. Specifically, how can we inform representatives of the business community that speech communication majors possess these important skills and competencies? We offer the following suggestions.

Given that a current misperception of our discipline seems to exist within the business community, a full-scale re-education process is needed. This process can be conceptualized within a model of the career education/re-education process (See Figure 11).

The model suggests that the career education/re-education process should begin with input from the business world, including recent graduates who have entered business careers, and data specifying state and national employment trends.

Input from these sources might be channeled most efficiently through career communication education task forces. The specification

Figure 11
MODEL OF CAREER EDUCATION/RE-EDUCATION PROCESS



22 - - - - - dotted line indicates output
_____ input

of career-oriented competencies and the development of departmental training programs in career education should be the major outputs of such task forces.

Institutional adaptation of task force materials should result in (a) intra-departmental program development, (b) extra-departmental programs to generate further input and to create effective departmental public relations in business settings, and (c) internship/cooperative-education programs for majors which combine intra- and extra-departmental functions.

Outputs of this re-education process should ultimately feed back to the business world, resulting in a clearer understanding and increased utilization of speech communication majors. The dynamic nature of the model suggests that career education/re-education is an ongoing process. New inputs from the business world should reflect the relative success of career education programs, and therefore should serve as the basis for program evaluation.

This model serves as a stimulus for the following suggestions:

1. Career communication education will succeed only to the extent that it is based on extensive research designed to secure input from the non-academic world, including specifically the business world. Such research should most logically be conducted by task forces in career communication education. As a result of such research, marketable career competencies should emerge.

2. Using guidelines provided by these task forces, institutions can then move toward competency-based programs which are adapted to their specific needs. The identification and integration of career-

oriented competencies would have additional benefits in (a) allowing majors to clearly articulate those career-oriented skills which they have acquired as a result of their academic experience, and (b) allowing prospective employers to correct misperceptions of our discipline and more readily place majors in jobs which utilize these skills and competencies.

3. Training programs in career communication education should be offered to all speech communication departments. Faculty must realize that career education programs do not necessarily have to undermine academic credibility. Career education programs, in fact, should increase our credibility with students, administrators, and the business world by demonstrating our flexibility and willingness to respond to economic demands of the times. In short, training programs must first create awareness and acceptance of the vital necessity of programs in career communication education, and secondly, provide tools with which to develop such programs.

4. Career communication education programs may well have their greatest strength when they are interdisciplinary in nature. It is imperative that speech communication faculty can identify other areas of study which, when combined with speech communication, can create an academic course of study which is marketable. Interdisciplinary combinations which merit further investigation might include marketing, sales, management, industrial psychology, public relations, personnel administration, journalism, advertising, human services counseling, and educational administration. The creation of both faculty and administration career education task forces on campuses across the country should provide

needed information and support for development of viable interdisciplinary programs. In addition, these task forces could serve a clearinghouse function to update available information on career options.

5. Public relations efforts on behalf of our discipline should be explored. It is significant to note that none of the respondents in this study had acquired an understanding of the speech communication discipline from professional literature or through contacts with speech communication departments. Thus, it would appear that our discipline has not made significant public relations efforts to correct misperceptions attached to the discipline of speech communication. Information concerning speech communication could be made available to placement offices, counseling services, employment agencies, and businesses. A variety of media could be used, including informational pamphlets, slide presentations, or film. In addition, research should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts. Ideally, these efforts should receive the financial support of the career education task force of SCA.

6. The development of internship programs will serve the purposes of (a) creating job markets for majors, (b) providing experience for future employment, and (c) presenting a realistic perception for businesses of what speech communication majors can do.

7. The total career education/re-education process ultimately provides to the business world and to our discipline a number of types of feedback which would result in a synchronization of our career education programs with the needs of the business world.

If the discipline of speech communication is to survive, we must make the commitment to move beyond our own confines. We must identify who prospective employers are, what they need, and how we can meet these needs. It is naive to expect that we will be able to send a major into the world of non-academic careers with no preparation for this world. We have the responsibility to our majors, and ultimately to our discipline, to specify valid job opportunities in which they may exercise their academic training.

FOOTNOTES

¹Sidney P. Marland, Jr., Speech presented to the Thirty-Third Session of the International Conference on Education. Geneva, Switzerland (September, 1971), cited in Kathleen Galvin and John Muchmore, "Career Education: A Challenge," Career Communication: Directions for the Seventies, Speech Communication Association, 1972.

²1971 Speech Communication Association Convention, cited in Charles U. Larson, "A Case for the Doctor of Arts in Speech Communication," Central States Speech Journal, XXIV (Spring, 1973), p. 60.

³Vincent S. Di Salvo, David Larsen and William J. Seiler, "Communication Skills: A Need as Seen by Organizational and Businessmen in Their First Five Years on the Job," Paper presented to the International Communication Association Convention, New Orleans, April, 1974.

⁴Kennicott, Patrick Curtis and L. David Schuelke (eds.) Career Communication: Directions for the Seventies. Proceedings of the Speech Communication Association Summer Conference VIII. New York, Speech Communication Association, 1972.

⁵Darrell T. Piersol, "Non-Academic Careers for Speech Communication Majors," Bulletin of the ADASC, 1 (October, 1972), p. 3.

⁶Phillip K. Taylor and Raymond W. Buchanan, "Vocational Marketability of Communication Competencies," Southern Speech Communication Journal, 38 (Spring, 1973), p. 290.

⁷The authors wish to extend their appreciation to Debbie Keating and Virginia Richmond for conducting interviews for this study.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introductory Cover Story:

We are a research team from the University of Nebraska and we have been asked to conduct research concerning the employment potential of several academic disciplines within the University. We are requesting information from a number of sources, including several reputable employment agencies in the area. Your agency has been recommended for inclusion in this study. Specifically, our goal is to be able to suggest to departments what kinds of liberal arts skills and competencies may be potentially marketable within the business world.

Rest assured that your name and responses to this survey will remain completely confidential. In other words, we will not identify you by name anywhere in the report.

Please realize that you can help these departments out by being accurate and honest in all your responses: there are no correct answers.

Items:

1. Suppose a client comes to you to find a job. He has a liberal arts degree and he possesses the following skills (give interviewee sheet listing skills and scale rankings). Now, in terms of his marketability, i.e., the ease with which you can refer him or her to existing jobs, will each of these skills be: (A) extremely important, (B) quite important, (C) somewhat important, (D) of little importance, or (E) of no importance?

Let's take these skills one at a time beginning with the first skill listed on your handout... (see handout, p. 3)

"For example, 'small group facilitation' might mean the..." (Give the skill description orally to interviewee). "Now, in terms of marketability, this skill would be:"

(A) <u>Extremely</u>	(B) <u>Quite</u>	(C) <u>Somewhat</u>	(D) <u>Of Little</u>	(E) <u>Of No</u>
Important	Important	Important	Importance	Importance

(Proceed with descriptions of remaining skills.)

"Now, I see that you've indicated that X number of these skills would be extremely important to your client in terms of his or her potential marketability. Of these X skills, could you indicate what you consider to be the most important one?" (Let interviewee answer before proceeding.) The second most important one? (Follow this rank ordering procedure until all skills have been rank ordered.)

"We are gathering data in our research for several academic disciplines. In order that we do not take too much of your time, today you will be answering questions concerning only one of these disciplines -- that being, speech communication."

2. If a person comes to your agency with an undergraduate degree in speech communication, what do you expect that person to be able to do -- what skills or knowledge do you expect that person to possess?
3. Do you expect anything different if the person has a master's degree in speech communication?
4. How difficult have you found or do you think it would be to place a speech communication major in a job? Why?
5. What kind of jobs would you recommend to a speech communication major?
6. What kind of job would you recommend to a ~~former~~ speech communication teacher who wishes to change jobs -- either because of no market or because the person desires a change in occupations?
7. What would you see as the ideal job for a speech communication major?
8. Have you ever had speech communication majors as clients? If so -- how many? Where have they been placed?
9. Are there any other academic disciplines which you think are closely related to speech communication? If so, what are they? How are they related?
10. When a client comes to your office with a degree in speech communication, are you satisfied that you have a clear understanding of what that major means?

If "yes" -- Where did this understanding come from?

If "no" -- Do you feel that you have some knowledge of the field of speech communication? Where did this knowledge come from?

Closing Remarks:

We would like to thank you very much for your time -- you have helped us a great deal. If you would like to find out about the results of this survey, we would be glad to send you a copy of our findings.

HANDOUT

1. SMALL GROUP FACILITATION:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
2. INTERVIEWING:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
3. PROBLEM SOLVING/DECISION MAKING:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
4. PUBLIC RELATIONS:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
5. LISTENING:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
6. PERSUASION:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
7. MOTIVATION:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
8. CONFLICT RESOLUTION:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
9. SPEAKING COMPETENCE:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
10. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance
11. QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES:
(A) Extremely (B) Quite (C) Somewhat (D) Of Little (E) Of No
Important Important Important Importance Importance